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Follow-up actions to the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development

Letter dated 8 April 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am enclosing the United States explanation of its position on the draft resolution entitled "Population, education and development" (E/CN.9/2003/L.5), which was adopted by the Commission on Population and Development on 4 April 2003 (see annex). In our intervention under item 7, "Adoption of the report of the Commission on its thirty-sixth session", we requested that the attached explanation be circulated as a document of the thirty-sixth session of the Commission and included in its report.

(*Signed*) John D. **Negroponte**

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Annex to the letter dated 8 April 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Explanation of Position by Ambassador Sichan Siv, United States Representative to the Economic and Social Council, on Resolution E/CN.9/2003/L.5 (Population, Education and Development), During the Thirty-sixth Session of the Commission on Population and Development, April 4, 2003

Mr. Chairman,

The United States will join consensus on the draft resolution on the Population, Education, and Development. While there is much in the resolution that we support, there are other elements on which we have very strong reservations.

The United States understands that the word "reaffirming" in the first, second and third preambular paragraphs as it relates to the "Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action;" does not constitute a reaffirmation of any language in those documents that can be interpreted as promoting the legalization or expansion of abortion services.

The United States fully supports the principle of voluntary choice in family planning. We strongly reiterate that in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning, and that women who have recourse to abortion should in all cases have humane treatment and counseling provided for them.

The United States emphasizes its commitment to programs that address greater male involvement in pregnancy prevention and voluntary family planning efforts, and the need to stress the practices of delaying sexual initiation, abstinence, monogamy, fidelity, partner reduction and condom use in order to, among other reasons, prevent HIV infection.

We are pleased that the resolution notes the importance of education, especially of young people, with particular regard to women and girls. The United States attaches great importance to universal access to primary and secondary education, particularly for girls, as an essential and integral part of women's sustainable socio-economic development.

The United States stresses the need to further address the importance of family stability, the role of fathers and parent-child communication on abstinence, delaying sexual initiation, and responsible behavior. In this regard, the United States emphasizes the importance it attaches to the involvement of parents in decisions affecting children and adolescents in all aspects of sexual and reproductive health.

Finally, the United States notes that, like other UN resolutions, the documents adopted at this Session contain important political goals and coordinated plans of action, but are not intended to and do not create legally binding obligations on States under international law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman